

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
June 6, 2009**

The Economic Development Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Wednesday, June 6, 2009 @ 7:00p.m in the Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Eileen Dubin called the meeting to order. Members present were Sally DeFauw, Julia Fauci, Jeff Metzger, Sr., Riley Oncken, Mark Todd and Pat Vary. Mr. Paul Borek, Aaron Ruder, Steve McClure, Andrew Hamilton, Gary Hanson and Elena Grimm were also present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Metzger, Sr., seconded by Ms. Vary, and it was carried to approve the minutes from April 2009.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Dubin said that she would like to amend the agenda for an item on Port St. Lucie, Florida and their stimulus ordinance under #9a New Business.

Moved by Ms. Vary, seconded by Ms. DeFauw, and it was carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments for the evening.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chairman Dubin said that we have received the grant in the amount of \$24,000 from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to research job creation and our labor market trends in the County and to create strategies to attract industries offering highly skilled/higher wage jobs. The project was proposed by the DeKalb County Economic Development Committee, and is being undertaken in cooperation with the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation and the NIU Center for Governmental Studies. The monies will be managed by the County and that this committee will be assigned as the task force along with the Economic Development Corporation, who will be appointing seven people from their board to sit on the task force. This research should take no longer than 5 months and that the project should be finished by December 2009.

Chairman Dubin also updated the committee about the Fiber Optic Network project. She said that she spoke with Herb Kuryliw from NIU and he said that they would be applying for the grant in September of 2009. This grant extends to the rural areas and helps to bring public and private entities together for this project proposal.

Chairman Dubin then spoke about the update on Tourism. She said that she has spoken with Ms. Deb Armstrong of the DeKalb Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau about attending the committee's meeting in July. She said yes and that she will be approaching the committee about a small amount of funding needed for a book to be produced covering the entire County.

ENTERPRISE ZONE FROM MENDOTA TO THE MONSANTO FACILITY IN WATERMAN, ILLINOIS

Chairman Dubin introduced Mr. Steve McClure and Mr. Andrew Hamilton of Opportunity Alliance LLC. Mr. McClure said that there is an Enterprise Zone established in Mendota, Illinois and they are here this evening to propose an expansion of that Zone into DeKalb County on behalf of the Monsanto Corporation. Monsanto would like to become exempt from state natural gas tax and if a company lies within an Enterprise Zone then they do not have to pay this tax (please see attachment to these minutes). Currently there is no Enterprise Zone in DeKalb County and there are no new Zones available. The expansion would include Mendota and then running the Enterprise Zone all the way up to Waterman, Illinois, along highways.

The expansion would work by having each unit of local government involved in the Enterprise Zone enter into and adopt an Enterprise Zone Resolution and Intergovernmental Agreements with Mendota's Enterprise Zone. These documents then would be submitted to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for certification.

Ms. Fauci said that she could not see approving this request for Monsanto since their company abandoned DeKalb County along with their jobs when they purchased DeKalb Pfizer and the building located in DeKalb, Illinois.

Waterman and DeKalb County would adopt the same incentives as Mendota did to create the Enterprise Zone like, waived permit fees, property tax abatements on improvements only, etc.

Mr. Oncken said that the real incentive is if Monsanto wants to expand their operation.

Mr. Borek, Executive Director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation said that he felt it would be a good action to do this proposal with the Mendota Enterprise Zone to help attract other companies and opportunities.

Mr. Todd said that he represents the Waterman voters as their county board member and that he felt that Monsanto's presence in that community is crucial.

Mr. Metzger, Sr., said that he would like more information sent to the committee. It was agreed that Mr. McClure would send additional information to Ms. Mary Supple, County Coordinator, so that she could forward it to the committee members.

Mr. Oncken asked Mr. McClure what the timetable was for this project?

Mr. McClure said that he would like to come back next month and ask for action to be taken. He said that possibly other businesses could be interested in this Enterprise Zone proposal, too.

Ms. Vary said that she would like to know what other businesses are in Mendota and using the Enterprise Zone?

Mr. McClure said that yes, they could find that out for the committee.

The committee thanked Mr. McClure and Mr. Hamilton for a very informative presentation.

UPDATE FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – MR. PAUL BOREK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Borek gave his monthly update on the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation. He said that SBI International is a company out of Aurora, Illinois, who is going to be moving here into a building in the Harvester area of DeKalb. They will be employing about 40 employees in the building and they have sales people all over the world.

Mr. Borek said that he attended the Wind Power 2009 event at McCormick Place. It attracted 20,000 people with 700 booths displaying various information on the Wind Power Industry. There are already jobs for this industry in Germany and parts of Europe. There is growth anticipated for this industry in the Chicago and Midwest area.

Mr. Borek then spoke about attending the Genoa Economic Development Commission meeting in which they requested help from the County to help generate more interest in AMTRAK coming through Genoa instead of in Belvidere. They mentioned that it would be more cost effective for AMTRAK to come through Genoa, too. He said that Joe Misurelli of the City of Genoa presented a report to the commission and he will send it on to this committee. Would your committee be interested in helping them to get AMTRAK to come to Genoa? Mr. Borek asked on behalf of Genoa.

The committee discussed that in the local newspaper it mentioned that Belvidere looked like they would be getting AMTRAK for sure and that it was not going to Genoa. Have things changed? They asked Mr. Borek.

Mr. Borek said that he did not know.

Chairman Dubin said that she would make contact with our legislators to see if the AMTRAK project is still open for it to come through Genoa yet and get back to the committee next month.

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOAN

Ms. Mary Ramp sent a one-page summary of a Economic Development Loan Program that is offered through her office for small businesses and job creation. Chairman Dubin asked the committee to review it over the next month and then the committee will discuss the item at the July committee meeting.

Mr. Borek said that he will be drafting a marketing plan for this loan program and will bring it to the committee meeting next month.

Before adjourning, Ms. Supple, DeKalb County Coordinator, updated the committee on the feedback of the attendees at the National County Government's Week – Greening our Future Event. The New Jobs in a Green Infrastructure Event went very well and people said that they liked Dr. Vohra of NIU very much and would like to see him again at one of our functions. They especially liked his talk on innovations and entrepreneurs.

Mr. Aaron Ruder, Administrative Intern, updated the committee on the item the Mr. Ken Andersen asked the Economic Development Committee to research regarding St. Lucie County, Florida's Stimulus Ordinance and to see if DeKalb County could adopt something like it. Mr. Ruder said that the idea is very good, but that St. Lucie's policies lacked sufficient enforcement for effective outcomes.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Oncken, seconded by Ms. DeFauw, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectively submitted,

Eileen Dubin, Chairman

ED:mcs

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